



SYNOPSIS.

Fran arrives at Hamilton. Gregory's home in Littleburg, but finds him absent conducting the choir at a camp meeting. She repairs thither in search of him, laughs during the service and is asked to leave. Abbott, Ashton, superintendent of schools, escorts Fran from the tent. He tells her Gregory is a wealthy man, deeply interested in charity work, and a gallant of the church. Ashton becomes greatly interested in Fran and while taking leave of her, holds her hand and is seen by Sapphira Clinton, sister of Robert Clinton, chairman of the school board. Fran tells Gregory she wants a home with him. Grace Noir, Gregory's private secretary, takes a violent dislike to Fran and advises her to go away at once. Fran hints at a twenty-year-old secret, and Gregory in agitation asks Grace to leave the room. Fran relates the story of how Gregory married a young girl at Springfield while attending college and then deserted her. Fran is the child of that marriage. Gregory had married his present wife three years before the death of Fran's mother. Fran takes a liking to Mrs. Gregory. Gregory explains that Fran is the daughter of a very dear friend who is dead. Fran agrees to the story. Mrs. Gregory insists on her making her home with them and takes her to her room. It is decided that Fran must go to school. Grace shows persistent interest in Gregory's story of his dead friend and hints that Fran may be an impostor. Fran declares that the secretary must go. Grace begins making excuses in an effort to drive Fran from the Gregory home, but Mrs. Gregory remains staunch in her friendship. Fran is ordered before Superintendent Ashton to be punished for insubordination in school. Chairman Clinton is present. The affair ends in Fran leaving the school in company of the two men to the amazement of the school-mongers of the town. Abbott, while taking a walk alone at midnight, finds Fran on a bridge telling her fortune by cards. She tells Abbott that she is the famous lion tamer, Fran Nonpareil. She fired of circus life and sought a home.

CHAPTER XI.—Continued.

As he looked into her eyes, all sense of the abnormal disappeared. "I have the imagination, Fran," he exclaimed impulsively, "if it is your life."

"In spite of the lions?" she asked, almost sternly.

"You needn't tell me a word," Abbott said. "I know all that one need know; it's written in your face, a story of sweet innocence and brave patience."

"But I want you to know," "Good!" he replied with a sudden smile. "Tell the story, then; if you were an Odysseus, you couldn't be too long."

"The first thing I remember is waking up to feel the car jerked, or stopped, or started and seeing lights flash past the windows—lanterns of the brakemen, or lamps of some town, dancing along the track. The sleeping car was home—the only home I knew. All night long there was the groaning of the wheels, the letting off of steam, the calls of the men. Bounder Brothers had their private train, and mother and I lived in our Pullman car. After a while I knew that folks stared at us because we were different from others."



"Poor Little Nonpareil!" murmured Abbott wistfully.

"We were show-people. Then the thing was to look like you didn't know, or didn't care, how much people stared. After that, I found out that I had no father; he'd deserted mother, and her uncle had turned her out of doors for marrying against his wishes, and she'd have starved if it hadn't been for the show-people."

"Dear Fran!" whispered Abbott tenderly.

"Mother had gone to Chicago, hoping for a position in some respectable office, but they didn't want a typewriter who wasn't a stenographer. But, winter—and mother had me—I was so little and bad! . . . In a cheap lodging house, mother got to know La-

PETRIFIED FALLS IN ALGERIA

Remarkable Mineral Formation Which Puzzles Scientists Called "The Bath of the Damned."

With all the beauty of a cataract of silvery water, there is in Algeria a remarkable petrified waterfall which recently has been engaging the attention of scientists.

This is the Hammam-Meskutun, which means "The Bath of the Damned," and is located 62 miles from Constantine, on the site of the ancient town of Ciria. This solidified cascade is the production of calcareous deposits from sulphurous and ferruginous mineral springs, issuing from the depths of the earth at a temperature of 95 degrees Centigrade.

"The Bath of the Damned," even from a near viewpoint, looks for all the world like a great wall of water dashing into a swirling pool at its foot, yet its gleaming, graceful curves and the apparently swirling eddies at its base are as fixed and immovable as if carved from the face of a granite cliff.



FRAN

BY JOHN BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY O. IRWIN MYERS

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Gonzetti, and she persuaded mother to wait with her for the season to open up, then go with Bounder Brothers; they were wintering in Chicago. It was such a kind of life as mother had never dreamed of, but it was more convenient than starving, and she thought it would give her a chance to find father—that traveling, all over the country. La Gonzetti was a lion-tamer, and that's what mother learned, and those two were the ones who could go inside Samson's cage. The life was awfully hard, but she got to like it, and everybody was kind to us, and money came pouring in, and she was always hoping to run across a clue to my father—and never did."

She paused, but at the pressure of Abbott's sympathetic hand, she went on with renewed courage:

"When I was big enough, I wore a tiny black skirt, and a red coat with shiny buttons, and I beat the drum in the carnival band. You ought to have seen me—so little. . . . Abbott, you can't imagine how little I was! We had about a dozen small shows in our company, fortune-tellers, minstrels, magic wonders, and all that—and the band had to march from one tent to the next, and stand out in front and play, to get the crowd in a bunch, so the free exhibition could work on their nerves. And I'd beat away, in my red coat . . . and there were always the strange faces, staring, staring—but I was so little! Sometimes they would smile at me, but mother had taught me never to speak to anyone, but to wear a glazed look like this—"

"How frightfully cold!" Abbott shivered. Then he laughed, and so did Fran. They had entered Littleburg. He added wickedly: "And how dreadfully near we are getting to your home."

Fran gurgled. "Wouldn't Grace Noir just die if she could see us!"

That sobered Abbott; considering his official position, it seemed high time for reflection. Fran resumed abruptly. "But I never really liked it because what I wanted was a home—to belong to somebody. Then I got to hating the bold stare of people's eyes, and their foolish gaping mouths, I hated being always on exhibition with every gesture watched, as if I'd been one of the trained dogs. I hated the public. I wanted to get away from the world—clear away from everybody . . . like I am now . . . with you. Isn't it great!"

"Mammoth!" Abbott declared, watering her words with liberal imagination.

"I must talk fast, or the Gregory house will be looming up at us. Mother taught me all she knew, though she hated books; she made herself think she was only in the show life till she could make a little more—all ways just a little more—she really loved it, you see. But I loved the books—study—anything that wasn't the show. It was kind of friendly when I began feeding Samson."

"Poor little Nonpareil!" murmured Abbott wistfully.

"And often when the show was being unloaded, I'd be stretched out in our sleeper, with a school book pressed close to the chinked window, catching the first light. When the maids were pounding away at the tent-poles, maybe I'd hunt a seat on some cage, if it had been drawn up under a tree, or maybe it'd be the ticket wagon, or even the stake pile—there you'd see me studying away for dear life, dressed in a plain little dress, trying to look like ordinary folks. Such a queer little chap, I was—and always trying to pretend that I wasn't! You'd have laughed to see me."

"Laughed at you!" cried Abbott indignantly. "Indeed I shouldn't."

"No?" exclaimed Fran, patting his arm impulsively.

"Dear little wonder!" he returned conclusively.

"I must tell you about one time," she continued gaily. "We were in New Orleans at the Mardi Gras, and I was expected to come into the ring riding Samson—not the vicious old lion, but cub—that was long after my days of the drum and the red coat, bless you! I was a lion-tamer, now, nearly thirty-

teen years old, if you'll believe me. Well! And what was I saying—you keep looking so friendly, you make me forget myself. Goodness, Abbott, it's so much fun talking to you. I've never mentioned all this to one soul in this town. . . . Well—oh, yes; I was to have come into the ring, riding Samson. Everybody was waiting for me. The band nearly blew itself black in the face. And what do you think was the matter?"

"Did Samson balk?" "No, it wasn't that. I was lying on the cage floor, with my head on Samson—Samson the Second made such a gorgeous and animated pillow!—and I was learning geology. I'd just found out that the world wasn't made in seven United States days, and it was such surprising news that I'd forgotten all about cages and lions and tents—if you could have seen me lying there—if you just could!"

"But I can!" Abbott declared. "Your long black hair is mingled with his tawny mane, and your cheeks are blooming—"

"And my feet are crossed," cried Fran.

"And your feet are crossed; and those little hands hold up the book." Abbott swiftly sketched in the details; "and your bosom is rising and falling, and your lips are parted—like now—showing perfect teeth—"

"Dressed in my tights and fluffy lace and jewels," Fran helped, "with bare arms and stars all in my hair. But the end came to everything when—when mother died. Her last words were about my father—how she hoped some day I'd meet him, and tell him she had forgiven. Mother sent me to her half-uncle. My! but that was mighty unpleasant!" Fran shook her head vigorously. "He began telling me about how mother had done wrong in marrying secretly, and he threw it up to me and I just told him . . ."

Up to his dead, now. I had to go back to the show—there wasn't any other place. But a few months ago I was of age, and I came into Uncle Ephraim's property, because I was the only living relation he had, so he couldn't help my getting it. I'd bet he's mad, now, that he didn't make a will! When he said that mother—it don't matter what he said—I just walked out of his door, this . . . Oh, goodness, we're here."

They stood before Hamilton Gregory's silent house.

"Good night," Fran said hastily. "It's a mistake to begin a long story on a short road. My! But wasn't that a short road, though!"

"Sometimes, you shall finish that story, Fran. I know of a road much longer than the one we've taken—we might try it some day, if you say so."

"I do say so. What road is it?" "Abbott had spoken of a long road without definite purpose, yet there was a glimmering perception of the reality, as he showed by saying tremulously: "This is the beginning of it—"

He bent down, as if to take her in his arms.

But Fran drew back, perhaps with a blush that the darkness concealed, certainly with a little laugh. "I'm afraid I'd get lost on that road," she murmured, "for I don't believe you know the way very well, yourself."

She sped lightly to the house, unlocked the door, and vanished.

CHAPTER XII.

Grace Captures the Outposts.

The next evening there was choir practice at the Walnut Street church. Abbott Ashton, hesitating to make his nightly plunge into the dust-clouds of learning, paused in the vestibule to take a peep at Grace. He knew she never missed a choir practice, for though she could neither sing nor play the organ, she thought it her duty to set an example of regular attendance that might be the means of bringing those who could do no other.

Abbott was not disappointed; but he was surprised to see Mrs. Jefferson in her wheel-chair at the end of the pew occupied by the secretary, while between them sat Mrs. Gregory. His surprise became astonishment on discovering Fran and Simon Jefferson in the choir loft, slyly whispering and nib-

bling candy, with the air of soldiers off duty—for the choir was in the throes of a solo.

Abbott, as if hypnotized by what he had seen, slowly entered the auditorium. Fran's keen eyes discovered him, and her face showed elfish mischief. Grace, following Fran's eyes, found the cause of the odd smile, and beckoned to Abbott. Hamilton Gregory, following Grace's glance—for he saw no one but her at the practices, since she inspired him with deepest fervor—felt suddenly as if he had lost something; he had often experienced the same sensation on seeing Grace approached by some unattached gentleman.

Grace motioned to Abbott to sit beside her, with a concentration of attention that showed her purpose of reaching a definite goal unsuspected by the other.

"I'm so glad Fran has taken a place in the choir," Abbott whispered to Grace. "And look at Simon Jefferson—who'd have thought it!"

Grace looked at Simon Jefferson; she also looked at Fran, but her compressed lips and reproving eye expressed none of Abbott's gladness. However, she responded with—"I am so glad you are here, Professor Ashton, for I'm in trouble, and I can't decide which way it is my duty to turn. Will you help me? I am going to trust you—it is a matter relating to Mr. Gregory."

Abbott was pleased that she should think him competent to advise her respecting her duty; at the same time he regretted that her confidence related to Mr. Gregory.

"Professor Ashton," she said softly, "does my position as hired secretary to Mr. Gregory carry with it the obligation to warn him of any misconduct in his household?"

The solo was dying away, and, sweet and low, it fell from heaven like manna upon his soul, blending divinely with the secretary's voice. Her expression "fired" sounded like a tragic note—to think of one so beautiful, so meek, so surrounded by mellow hymn-notes, being hired!

"You hesitate to advise me, before you know all," she said, "and you are right. In a moment the choir will be singing louder, and we can all talk together. Mrs. Gregory should be consulted, too."

Grace, conscious of doing all that one could in consulting Mrs. Gregory, "too," looked toward the choir loft, and smiled into Hamilton Gregory's eyes. How his baton, inspired by that smile, cut magic runes in the air!

"Mrs. Gregory," Grace said in a low voice, "I suppose Professor Ashton is so surprised at seeing you in church—it has been more than five months, hasn't it? . . . that I'm afraid I can't think about what I'm saying."

Mrs. Gregory could not help feeling in the way, because her husband seemed to share Grace's feeling. Instinctively she turned to her mother and laid her hand on the invalid's arm.

"They ain't bothering me, Lucy," said the old lady, alertly. "I can't hear their noise, and when I shut my eyes I can see their motions."

"I have something to tell you both," Grace said solemnly. "Last night, I couldn't sleep, and that made me sensitive to noises. I thought I heard some one slipping from the house just as the clock struck half-past eleven. It seemed incredible, for I knew if it were anyone, it was that Fran, and I didn't think even she would do that."

It was as if Abbott had suddenly raised a window in a raw wind. His temperature descended. The other's manner of saying "That Fran!" obscured his glass of the future.

Mrs. Gregory said quickly, "Fran leave the house at half-past eleven? Impossible."

"How do you know," Abbott asked, "that Fran left the house at such a time of the night?" The question was unfair since it suggested denial, but her feeling for Fran seemed to call for unfairness to Grace.

"I will tell you," Grace responded, with the distinctness of one in power. "At the time, I told myself that even Fran would not do that. But, a long time afterward, I heard another sound,

anxiously waiting for the sweet reply that he felt sure must be hovering on those pretty lips.

"It's—it's for your clean clothes, isn't it?" she queried softly.

Turkish Slaves. Abdul Hamid's view that the slave in a Turkish household is much better off than a servant girl is fully supported by Mr. Duckett Ferriman in "Turkey and the Turks." The chief points urged are that the owner is responsible for the slave's maintenance and cannot turn her adrift, that she is treated as one of the family, has light duties, and is taught accomplishments, and that she has chances of a rich marriage.

An Englishwoman, governess and companion in a house on the Bosphorus, was asked by some English visitors who were the charmingly dressed girls they saw. "Servants," she said, meaning to spare the girls' feelings. But when the visitors had gone the girls bitterly reproached her for "shaming" them. "You are a servant. You are paid, we are not. We are slaves, not servants. Why did you tell a falsehood to shame us?"

Her gaze was fixed on the water. "Darling!" he murmured again, drawing her towards him. "Can you guess why I come home every Saturday?"

"Yes," was the scarcely whispered answer. "What is it, dearest?" he asked.

"I have no delusions at all," Sweet Angelina did not give the sweet response Henry so ardently expected.

Love's young dream is indeed a beautiful thing. Sweet Angelina and Henry thought it hardly possible such bliss could be theirs as they sat on the river bank in the cool of an August evening.

They met only at week-ends, for he was a toiler in the city, and he found it cheaper to lodge near his work.

And now the blessed week-end spent at home was here, and he could see nothing but uninterrupted happiness till Monday morning. He slipped his arm round his sweetheart's waist. "Dearest!" he said.

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CZAR IS VERY RICH

Russian Sovereign Has Many Palaces to House Treasures.

In Fact, So Numerous Are They That the Emperor Is a Stranger to Many of Them—Nicholas Has Very Simple Taste.

London.—It is only fitting that a sovereign who rules a territory 70 times as large as the British Isles, whose annual revenue is counted in millions, and whose splendor and power are so great that in the simple minds of his moujik subjects he is "a cousin of God himself," should have palaces in plenty to house his magnificence. And the autocrat of all the Russias, if he were much more exacting than he is, could scarcely resist a feeling of pride as he contemplates the number of palaces in his name, each of which is full of treasures such as Croesus himself might envy, re-



In One of the Czar's Palaces.

marks the London Weekly Telegraph. So many are his stately pleasure houses that some are less known to him than to the stranger who is permitted to explore them with eyes of wonder. There are, it is said, hundreds of rooms into which his august feet have never entered, and there are countless treasures of art which he would not recognize as his own.

Nor can we wonder that this should be so when we consider that in and around St. Petersburg alone there are a dozen imperial houses, one of which is large enough to give luxurious lodging to many thousands of guests; and that the Kremlin at Moscow is a small "city of palaces," to find a parallel to which we should have to imagine Windsor castle, Buckingham palace and the Tower of London inclosed with the same wall.

The Winter palace, which stretches its long imposing front on the bank of the Neva at St. Petersburg, fronted and supported by massive columns and crowned through all its length by beautiful statuary, has alone more than ample accommodation for every branch of the imperial family (forty in number and dowered with estates 2,000,000 acres larger than Scotland), with their armies of servants and attendants. And the interior of this vast pile is even more impressive than its dimensions.

The chief glory of Peterhof, a few miles from St. Petersburg, are the glorious gardens with fountains that rival, if they do not eclipse, those at Versailles. In the park of Tsarskoe-Selo stands the Alexander Schloss, a smaller palace, but crowded from basement to ceiling with articles of blazerie, gathered from all the corners of the earth, with paintings by the greatest artists of Russia, and a singularly fine collection of models, chiefly military. This palace has seen the cradling of more than one of the children of the present czar.

When Nicholas wishes to escape still more from the world of pomp and ceremonial, he finds an ideal refuge in his castle at Spala, in Russian Poland, hidden away in the heart of a vast forest. This has been a favorite retreat of many a czar; for here, if anywhere, it is possible to shake off the burden of state and to lead the simple life of a country gentleman, with the best of sport to make the days pass pleasantly. Here, as at Livadia, a charming country home among the Crimean vineyards, the emperor and empress have spent many of their happiest hours together, renewing the days of their wooing in England amid the peaceful scenery of the Thames. Here, paddling in little wherries, pulling up backwaters, the future ruler of a hundred and more millions humbly pressed his suit. He was so happy and contented in this rustic retreat that he rejected all offers to amuse him.

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Tree Earns \$3,205.

What is probably the most valuable tree in the world is an alligator pear tree at Whittier, Cal., which netted its owner a profit of \$3,205 in